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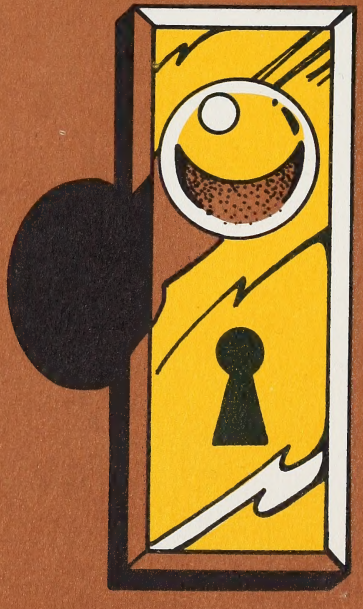
Careers in Recreation

"COME IN AND BROWSE"



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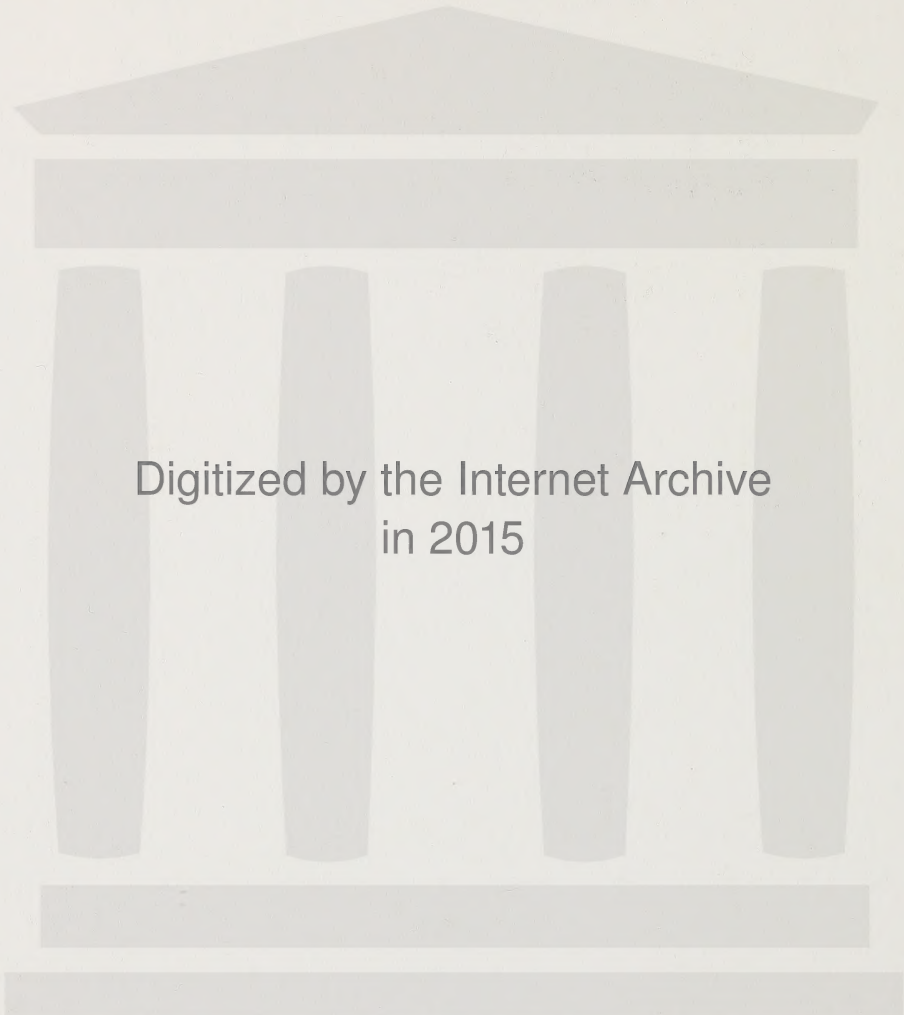
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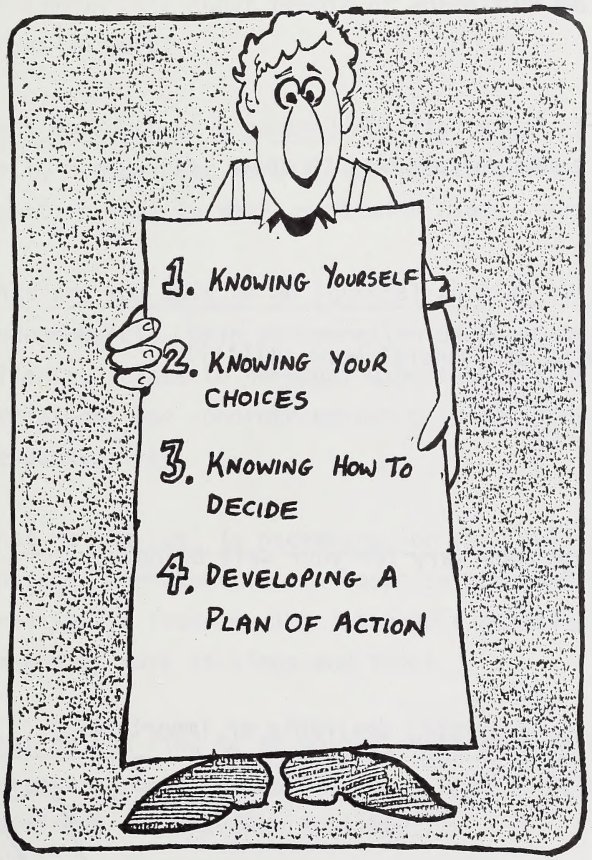
CAREERS IN RECREATION

CANADIANA
MAR 29 1985

Choosing your career is an important process. It starts with careful planning and continues with decision making and action. It is a process which begins and ends with you - even though you may seek counsel and input from others along the way. It is your life and the decisions concerning your career choice must be made by you.

Planning for your career involves the following:



As you consider a career in recreation, remember these aspects of career planning. They deserve your careful attention.

Knowing Yourself

There is no one else in the world quite like you. Your unique personal interests, aptitudes, skills, needs and values may or may not suit the demands and rewards of a career in recreation. Examine yourself closely and answer the following questions:

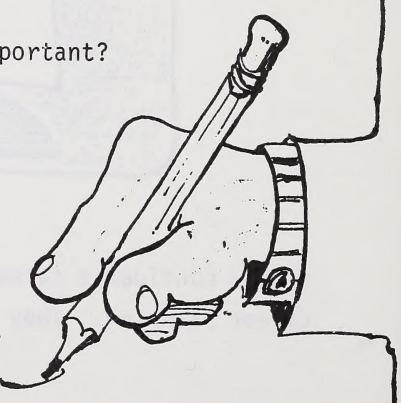
a) What do you like to do?

b) What do you have a natural ability to do?

c) What are you able to do (general work skills)?

d) What do you feel is necessary for your well being?

e) What do you find to be worthy, desirable or important?



As you have thoughtfully responded to the above questions, you have brought into focus the picture of yourself and now need to find a suitable career frame. Compare your responses to those most commonly given by recreation professionals.

a) What do you like to do? Deal with people as customers, clients, associates. Work to improve social conditions of others. Direct, organize or plan an activity. Study or communicate about people or animals. Abstract or creative work.

b) What do you have a natural ability to do? Learn reasonably well, communicate verbally, organize numbers and clerical functions fairly well, work with hands, perceive form and space.

c) What are you able to do (general work skills)? Work independently, gain co-operation of co-workers, helpers or clients, relate to personal experiences as a basis for decisions, use concrete evidence in decision making, take responsibility.

d) What do you feel is necessary for your well being? Social contact, opportunities to exercise personal initiative and creativity, freedom with reasonable guidelines, occassional change of work settings and tasks.

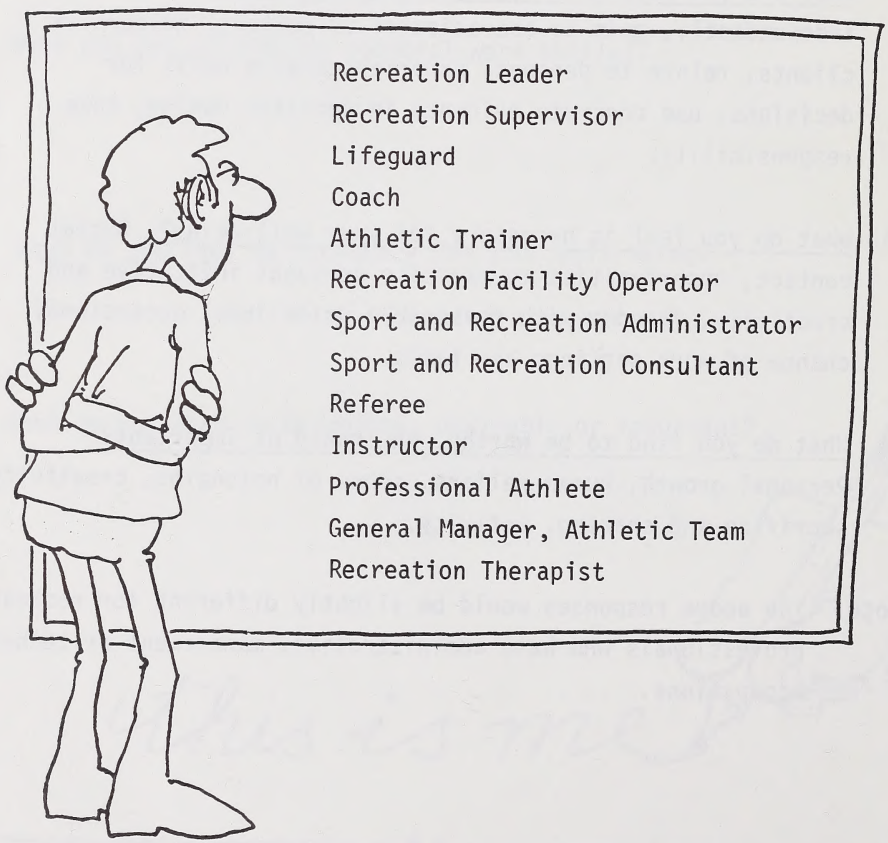
e) What do you find to be worthy, desirable or important? Personal growth, human welfare, sense of belonging, creativity, sacrifice and sharing, activity.

Note: The above responses would be slightly different for recreation professionals who have administrative, management or technical occupations.

Know yourself and know how you will fit in. If your responses were significantly different than the examples given, consider carefully whether the difference is better explained by a career/person mismatch or by virtue of your unique qualities that could enhance your ability to find satisfaction in and contribute to a career in recreation.

Knowing Your Choices

In Canada there are approximately 6700 different occupations or types of employment. There are literally millions of jobs and there are thousands of people working in the field of recreation. The City of Calgary alone has 137 different recreation job titles while the City of Edmonton lists even more. Familiar job titles include:



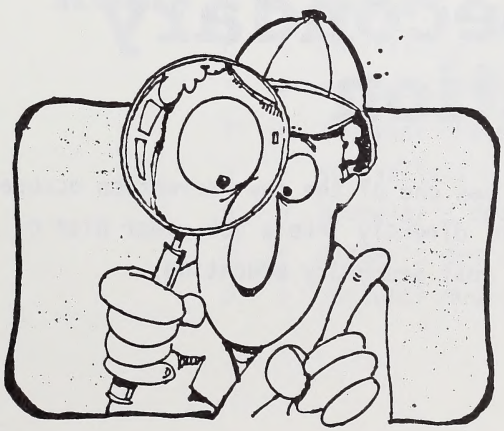
- Recreation Leader
- Recreation Supervisor
- Lifeguard
- Coach
- Athletic Trainer
- Recreation Facility Operator
- Sport and Recreation Administrator
- Sport and Recreation Consultant
- Referee
- Instructor
- Professional Athlete
- General Manager, Athletic Team
- Recreation Therapist

The choices are many and you will need to review each one closely. Think about each type of job in terms of a) what it involves (duties, activities, responsibilities, hours, etc.), b) what it requires (education, training, personal qualifications) and c) what it has to offer (salary, benefits, working conditions opportunities for advancement and promotion, etc.).
Much of this information can be obtained by reading about the job and talking to a practitioner in a similar position. You will, however, get your clearest understanding of recreation careers by working in a temporary or part time job or by doing volunteer work related to your occupational interest.

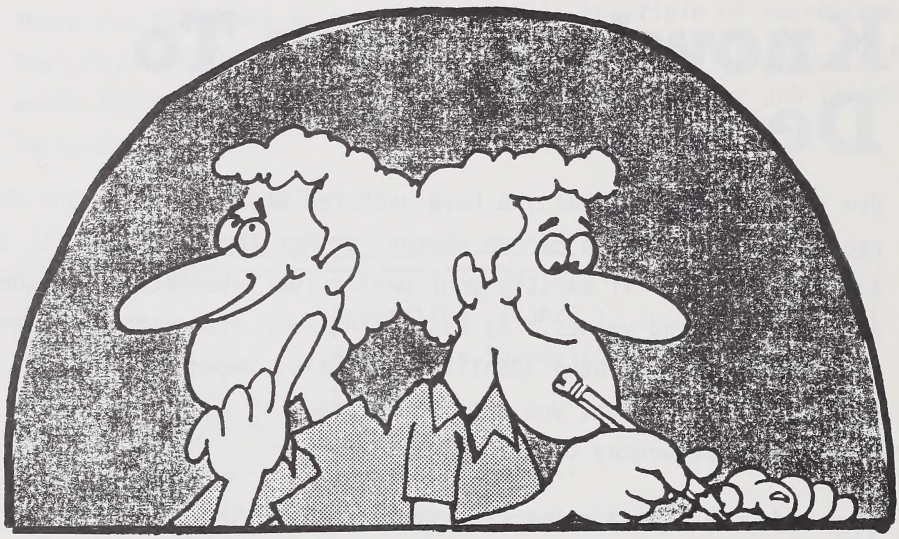
Knowing How To Decide

Use the information that you have gathered about yourself and about recreation careers and decide whether or not the occupation(s) you are considering will satisfy your particular interests, aptitudes, skills, needs and values. By evaluating each alternative against those qualities you have identified as being important to your satisfaction in a job, you can foresee some of the positive and negative consequences of each alternative.

If you decide that a career in recreation is what you want, you can then concentrate on an occupation or particular job position for which you will prepare yourself.



Once you have decided on your goal, you can chart a course of action to get there. Break down your goal into smaller goals or steps to be carried out. Set time objectives for when you want to accomplish each short goal or step. Anticipate problems that might arise and make plans that you can substitute to deal with those problems. Finally, periodically review your plans and progress to make sure that you are carrying out your decisions as planned.



Post-Secondary Education

Unless you have chosen one of the few recreation occupations that leads you from high school directly into a job, your plan of action is almost certain to include post secondary education.

In Alberta there are a number of programs available to help prepare you for a career in recreation.

	Leisure Education and Recreation Management	Recreation Administration	Recreation Facility Operation & Maintenance	Therapeutic Recreation	Physical Education
Lethbridge Community College	2d			S	
Medicine Hat College		1*			1* 2*
Mount Royal College	2d		S	S	2* 2d
Red Deer College		1*			2*
Camrose Lutheran College		1*			
Concordia College		1*			1*
S.A.I.T.			1c		
University of Alberta		BM			BMD
University of Lethbridge	B				B
University of Calgary					B
Canadian Union College					2*
Grande Prairie		1*			2*

Key

d = diploma
c = certificate
1* = one year transfer
2* = two year transfer
S = specialization
B = bachelor's degree
M = master's degree
D = doctoral degree

Job Settings

Recreation professionals are employed in many different settings and by a wide variety of employers.

A. Municipal Recreation and Parks Departments:
Historically, they represent the setting where the greatest number of jobs are available and subsequently where the greatest number of trained personnel are placed. There are positions for superintendents or directors, assistant directors, program supervisors, centre directors, specialists, recreation analysts, playground supervisors, acquatic staff, and facility management and maintenance personnel.

B. Provincial and Federal Government:
These higher levels of government are becoming increasingly involved in developing systems and structures whereby leisure services are being made available to a greater number of Albertans. Positions include researchers, planners, administrators, consultants, recreation economists, naturalists and facility specialists.

C. Recreation and Sport Associations:
These organizations provide service at local, regional and provincial levels. There are positions for executive directors technical directors, program directors, coaches, instructors, facility operators and activity specialists with provincial recreation associations and community agencies like the YMCA, YWCA, Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, Kinsmen, etc.

D. Institutional Recreation:
Many people need specialized programs of a custodial or rehabilitative nature. Institutions employ recreation specialists and therapists for the aged, mentally and physically disabled, mentally ill, children's homes, correctional institutions and hospitals.

E. Industrial Recreation:
The provision of recreation programs for employees of a company has created positions of employment for many trained recreation leaders as administrators and program specialists.

F. Church Recreation:

The opportunity to render assistance to others and reinforce religious concepts often occurs in the recreation environment. Therefore, many churches or church auxilliaries employ full-time or part-time recreation personnel.

G. Camping and Outdoor Education:

Schools and public and private camps seek experienced and qualified staff for outdoor education and camp programs. Some of these positions are full-time and year round. They include outdoor education and survival instructors, camp directors, camp leaders, guides and naturalists.

H. Commercial Recreation:

Administrators, program specialists and facility operators are needed for the many recreation clubs, resorts and private recreation facilities in Alberta.

I. Canadian Armed Forces:

A military installation is much like a community and has similar needs for trained recreation personnel in a variety of positions.

J. Community Education:

Recreation services are often a part of a community education program and are delivered through a community school. Community school co-ordinators, program specialists and instructors are often people with a sound background and education in recreation.

K. Research and Planning:

Innovative programs and new developments in recreation are realized only when adequate planning and research has been completed. Many individuals are entering the profession to perform such tasks as private consultants and planners.

L. Teaching:

The pre-professional training of recreation leaders and specialists is partly the responsibility of teachers in universities, colleges, institutes and secondary schools.

Entry Level

Entry level jobs in the field of recreation are the volunteer or part-time jobs that you undertake before and during your specialized education or formal training. Though sometimes possible, it is not probable that you will enter the work force as a recreation director, facility manager or senior consultant. Much of what makes a recreation professional successful is the variety of experiences and skills developed while working "up the ladder". If you enter the full-time work force with many skills and experiences, your entry level may be higher than if you are not so well prepared.

When you list your alternatives and set your goals, ask potential employers or career counsellors about the entry level. Continue to work as if you will be starting at the top, but be prepared to enter the organization at the point best suited to your skills, experiences and training.

Professional Associations

Alberta Recreation and Parks Association
Canadian Parks/Recreation Association
Community Education Association of Alberta
Alberta Association of Recreation Facility Personnel
Therapeutic Recreation Association of Alberta

More Information

If you still have questions about a career in recreation, don't leave them unanswered. If you are a high school student contact your school guidance counsellor, or if you're an adult contact your nearest Alberta Career Centre.

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Alberta
RECREATION AND PARKS